

→ ZERO JOBS!

Workers' crisis deepens

Time to fight back

By Fred Goldstein

The capitalist economy lurched toward renewed crisis as the U.S. government announced that no new jobs were created in the month of August. This disastrous news for the 30 million unemployed and underemployed workers in the U.S. comes against a background of a menacing world economic slowdown.

In addition to the zero jobs growth numbers for August, both June and July numbers for job creation were revised downward by a total of 58,000. The zero jobs number is part of a steady downward trend.

While this is bad news for the unemployed, those who are working also took a hit in August. The greater the unemployment, the greater the pressure on those workers who still have jobs. This pressure shows up in the latest statistics.

Weekly hours worked fell from 34.3 to 34.2, while hourly wages declined by an average of 3 cents. These numbers seem small but they add up to an average decline in weekly wages of almost 5 percent on an annual basis.

Furthermore, there was an increase of 430,000 "involuntary part-time" workers — workers who need a full-time job but have to work part-time, either because they were put on short hours or because that was all the bosses were offering to new hires.

The bosses relish the mass unemployment because of the competition it creates among workers, making it easier to slash wages, enforce speedups, cut benefits and thus wring more and more profits out of the sweat of the workers. And importantly, the higher the level of unemployment, the greater the threat to the unions, as both companies and governments take aim at union contracts, knowing that strikes are difficult to carry out during periods of high unemployment.

The racist effects of unemployment were dramatized again in August as the jobless rate for African Americans officially reached 16.7 percent while for Latinos/as it was 11.3 percent. When you look at the number of workers who have dropped out of the work force

and are not counted in the unemployment statistics, the percentages of oppressed workers out of work are vastly greater.

Two years after jobless recovery, a new crisis is brewing

It is now more than two years into the so-called "recovery." The capitalist profit system, the so-called "free market," has left tens of millions without full-time employment. The poverty rate is rising; one-sixth of the population suffers from hunger, including one-fourth of the children; millions are facing foreclosure and eviction.

Now, piled upon this jobless recovery is the threat of a new wave of layoffs. The growth of the U.S. economy slowed to 1 percent in the first half of this year. All of world capitalism is in fact slowing down, whether in Europe, including Germany, France, and England; in Asia, including Japan, South Korea, India and China; or in Latin America, including its largest economy, Brazil.

Economic growth and workers under capitalism

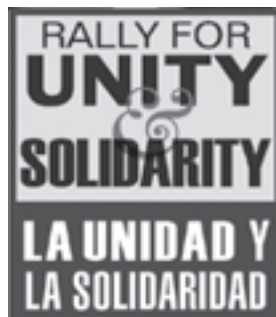
The question of economic growth is crucial to the condition of the working class. Under capitalism workers have only two conditions with respect to jobs. A worker is either being exploited by a capitalist boss or by some level of government and thus has a job, or a worker is unemployed. There is nothing in between.

The growth of capitalist production means more workers are needed to be exploited and services need to expand. Thus workers have jobs, even if more and

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On 9/11 — SAY NO TO RACISM!

Anti-war message from World Trade Center worker 3



STRUGGLES FOR SURVIVAL

- Foreclosure stopped!
- Disabled demand transit
- Affordable medicine

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▶ ATTICA — RIGHT TO REBEL

What we wrote
40 years ago

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ALERT: STOP the execution of TROY DAVIS!

Georgia is moving to execute Troy Davis, an African American from Savannah whose case has brought worldwide attention to the discriminatory legal system in the U.S. Convicted solely on the basis of eyewitness testimony which has been largely recanted,

Davis is scheduled for execution on Sept. 21. Activists around the world are taking steps to prevent this racist injustice. To sign the petition issued by the International Action Center, go to iacenter.org/troydavis. For more information, go to www.aiusa.org.



WISCONSIN SAYS 'NAZIS OUT!'



L.U.V. Brigade in Milwaukee before joining anti-Nazi protest. Page 2.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

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Nazis protected by cops but Wisconsin struggle drives out racists

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
West Allis, Wis.

More than 2,000 protesters came out here in the pouring rain on Sept. 3 to tell about 20 Nazis and their big-business and banking backers that their hatred, racism and anti-union stance are not wanted.

The protest began with a rally which had a powerful, diverse array of speakers that included representatives of the African-American, Latino/a and other communities of color; the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer community; the Jewish community; youth; students; the faith-based community; the immigrant community and others.

About an hour after this rally, the Nazis, escorted by police to a site behind a chain-link fence, attempted to hold a brief “recruitment rally” at city hall. The fascists were directly confronted by a multinational, intergenerational crowd holding signs such as “Jobs, Social Security and health care, not hate,” and banners declaring slogans like “West Allis says NO to racism, union-busting.”

At one point the protesters confronted white supremacists who were standing at a gas station taunting African Americans and others. Although the racists were adjacent to city hall and had open containers of alcohol, the cops did nothing. In fact, the fully armed police on mounted horses protected the racists and threatened the counter-protesters with arrest and physical harm.

Well over 150 police from all over metro Milwaukee and beyond were out in force to protect the Nazis, costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Nazis’ vile words were drowned out by the crowd, with chants such as, “Hey hey, ho ho, Nazi hate has got to go!” Due to the protesters’ chants and militancy, especially that of African-American youth and students, the racists packed up and left early, escorted by the police on a taxpayer-funded yellow school bus.

Delegations of protesters came from the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice in Madison, Wis.; postal workers from Green Bay, Wis.; Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) and Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions & Utility Shutoffs activists from Detroit. Residents from many communities throughout metro Milwaukee and elsewhere also came out to confront the Nazis.

The morning of Sept. 3 a youth and student organiza-



Youth hold banner at West Allis protest.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

tion called the L.U.V. Brigade and other African-American community organizations held an anti-Nazi event at Red Arrow Park in downtown Milwaukee.

“We have to fight injustice. We have to fight against oppression. The Black community faces racism and oppression every day through the court system, the police and the education system. We can’t allow ourselves to be terrorized. We have to fight the power. We can’t allow the police to do us any kind of way. We have power when we come together. We can change the world,” said Khalil Coleman, leader of the L.U.V. Brigade, speaking to the crowd at Red Arrow Park. Participants at the L.U.V. Brigade event then traveled to West Allis to join the counter-protesters there.

A coalition of more than 30 organizations throughout metro Milwaukee mobilized for more than two weeks for the protests against the fascists. The coalition included members of unions such as the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; and the Service Employees union; and activist groups such as Peace Action Wisconsin; the L.U.V. Brigade; the Latin American Solidarity Committee; the Freedom Road Socialist Organization; Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied For Hope (MICA); Students for a Democratic Society; Voces de la Frontera; the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement; and Workers World Party.

Organizing leading up to Sept. 3 included the distribution of thousands of leaflets and posters throughout metro Milwaukee and beyond. Organizers went to West Allis to distribute leaflets and talk to residents and small business owners. A media campaign counteracted the lies of the Nazis and pointed out their bloody history in numerous capitalist countries. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

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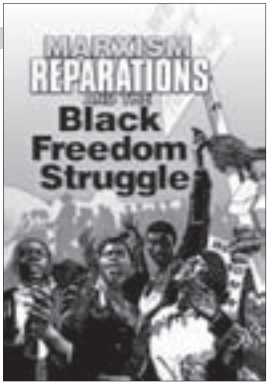
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This Sept. 11, say NO to racism

By Tony Murphy
New York

Last year there was an overwhelming response to the International Action Center's call for an anti-racist demonstration on Sept. 11.

The demonstration, headed by the slogan, "Unity, Respect, Jobs Justice; No to Racism and Anti-Muslim Bigotry," vastly outnumbered last year's anti-Muslim September 11 rally against New York's Park 51, the Islamic Cultural Center.

Racist forces such as Stop the Islamization of America and other similar hate groups thought they could use the anniversary to whip up anti-Muslim sentiment but were out-mobilized. The free publicity they received from the corporate media actually helped build the IAC's anti-racist mobilization.

This year the SIOA and their kind are at it again and have called another racist Sept. 11 rally. With all the patriotism and praise for the imperialist military that will accompany the day's tenth anniversary, this year's IAC counterdemonstration will be more important than ever.

It will also be an opportunity for building multinational, classwide solidarity at a time when the economic crisis is worsening and a unified fight for jobs is all-important.

Outnumbered in 2010, the anti-Muslim forces thought that this year's tenth anniversary of Sept. 11 would score them a propaganda victory. That changed when

neo-fascist Anders Breivik killed 77 people in Norway and cited the writings of SIOA's Pam Geller as an inspiration.

Racists like Geller and Florida pastor Terry Jones — who last year threatened to burn copies of the Quran — are not dominating the news cycle this year. However, the scapegoating campaign against Muslims, as well as other nationalities, is in full force as the capitalist crisis shows no sign of abating.

The Associated Press recently uncovered a campaign jointly organized by the New York Police Department and the CIA to spy on Muslims in mosques, cafes and other gathering places.

Also, a study by the Mother Jones independent news organization and the University of California exposed something suspicious about the vast majority of so-called domestic terrorist plots "thwarted" by the FBI and supposedly organized by Muslims. They were, in fact, manufactured by the FBI — especially through reliance on paid informants and provocateurs.

The atmosphere created by these witch-



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

A year ago on 9/11, thousands rallied against racism in downtown New York.

WW PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD



hunt and criminalizing activities led to incidents like one in late August, when Muslim families attending an amusement park in Rye, N.Y., were attacked by police. Women defending their right to wear the hijab were shoved to the ground and beaten.

"What is being described in the media as a 'melee' or 'brawl' was, in fact, a po-

frenzy in the media and legislation targeting the Latino/a community, along with openly racist rallies like the one in West Allis, Wis., on Sept. 3, against which the Bail Out the People Movement organized a successful counterdemonstration that outnumbered the Nazis at least 50 to 1.

"As the Great Recession deepens, the need to counter the ugly rise of racism has become a necessary part of the fight for jobs and against cutbacks," said Larry Holmes of BOPM, one of the groups supporting the Unity Solidarity Rally.

"As we fight mass layoffs and evictions, we can't afford to be divided by racism or bigotry," Holmes said. "And New Yorkers can't allow the anniversary of September 11 to be used to promote an anti-Muslim frenzy. This is the time for thousands to come out as they did last year for solidarity, respect and jobs." □

10 years after working in WTC #1

WW editor reviews political impact of 9/11

By John Catalinotto
New York

In September 2001, this writer and 1,800 other employees of a health-insurance company worked in World Trade Center #1. Our department was on the 31st floor. Our official starting time was 8:45 a.m., and the first plane struck that building at 8:48 a.m. on Sept. 11. Our starting time was flexible. I usually arrived late and left late.

I had worked late the night before, waiting to leave until 9 p.m. when a rainstorm ended. I would have walked to work the next morning, which was beautiful and clear. I often walked the three miles along the Hudson River from Chelsea to the WTC.

But I got a call at 9 a.m. from a friend, who wanted to be sure I was late as usual. When he gave me the news, we both thought an accident with a small plane had happened, like the one at the Empire State Building in 1945. No one answered my call

to the office so I decided to stay home.

I soon learned by radio news that a second plane had hit WTC #2 and a third had hit the Pentagon. I knew immediately that no matter who was responsible, the Bush administration would use the event as an excuse to launch a war — somewhere.

I called the editor of Workers World newspaper, Deirdre Griswold, and suggested we editors meet on an emergency basis to redesign the coming issue. As I started to walk toward Eighth Avenue at 10:00 a.m., WTC #2 collapsed. Everyone above the floors where the planes hit and all in the planes died, along with the "first responders," especially firefighters.

Thirteen of my co-workers died, including some colleagues who couldn't walk. Most workers either hadn't arrived or quickly ran down the smoky stairs. They were traumatized for years, and I caught some of that, too. Having a political interpretation of the events doesn't make you immune to the feelings.

Despite this trauma, no one among the 20 people I worked most closely with talked about "revenge" or spoke about going to war. But after about 36 hours of George W. Bush flying around the country and Dick Cheney hiding in the bunker, the Bush administration went on the offensive.

As some people from inside the administration later pointed out, even as they were readying an attack on Afghanistan they were also preparing an invasion of Iraq. They rushed through the Patriot Act to militarize U.S. society. They took advantage of a wave of patriotism to recruit to the military and secret service organizations.

There was almost no opposition from within the ruling class and its corporate media to either of these wars, despite all the contradictions in the government's argument.

Let's consider two of those contradictions.

Washington had built up al-Qaida and other groups like it to battle the Soviet assistance to the Afghan revolution.

Those who allegedly carried out the 9/11 attack were almost all Saudi citizens; they were enemies of the secular Ba'athist government in Iraq. Yet the Bush gang blamed Saddam Hussein for being behind this attack, though the attack was carried out by his sworn enemies.

No significant capitalist media challenged these obvious lies.

However 9/11 came about, the Bush administration immediately used it to conspire to invade Iraq, even without the U.S.'s NATO allies. This Sept. 2 former U.S. Ambassador to Germany John Kornblum said: "I don't know what they would have done if September 11 hadn't occurred. Either they would have done nothing or they would have had to invent another pretext." (presse.phoenix.de)

Now that these wars — and a new one in Libya — have continued under a Democratic administration, it's obvious that doing nothing was off the table. They would have invented another pretext. The imperialist attempt to reconquer those parts of the colonial world that freed themselves at least partly after World War II, while the U.S. was locked in a Cold War with the USSR, does not depend on having a convenient excuse.

If the "war on terror" doesn't serve as a pretext, then "saving civilians" will. That was the excuse in Yugoslavia, as it is now in Libya.

What is more important to the imperialist offensive than the Sept. 11 pretext is the fact that there is no longer a Soviet Union. The very existence of the USSR as a powerful anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist entity had strengthened independence struggles in the countries of the former colonial world.

Local resistance movements have stymied Washington in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Yet the Pentagon has been able to keep a foothold in both countries and risk a new war in Libya. It could never do that when it had to confront the USSR on many fronts.

It is important that progressives again plan to show their banners near the World Trade Center for the 10-year commemoration. They will be confronting the anti-Muslim bigots and building unity. And they will expose the misuse of 9/11 as a pretext for more war. Resistance to future wars will have to be built at home.

The above is based on a much longer interview that Catalinotto, a managing editor of WW, did with the progressive German daily newspaper, Junge Welt, that will be published in a special section on 9/11.



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New York’s Catskills

Residents struggle to survive Hurricane Irene

By René Imperato
& Stephanie Hedgecoke
Woodstock, N.Y.



Flooding continued for days after the storm in New York.

It may not be apparent to those just happy that the winds have died down, but for thousands whose homes and lives were damaged and destroyed in epic flooding following Hurricane Irene’s arrival, the storm’s aftermath is a prolonged struggle to survive. The initial disaster downed tens of thousands of power lines and trees throughout a huge area inland of the Atlantic Coast, from South Carolina to up-state New York to Vermont.

Here in New York state’s Hudson Valley, you can see the results. Volunteers gathered donations of supplies on Sept. 4, one week after the storm. They took them from the damaged towns of Woodstock and Ellenville to the ravaged towns of Phoenicia, Fleishmanns and Margaretville, and to some others like Prattsville, which was totally devastated.

It took workers two days to clear fallen trees that blocked large portions of the New York Thruway. Fallen trees and power lines plus flood waters closed smaller roadways all over the region. Roads were even washed out.

Millions lost power for days and many of them still have no power as of Sept. 6. In New York state alone, 600 roads and 22 state bridges were wiped out, and uncounted other county, town and private bridges washed away.

As county and town workers began to explore the damage, a town cop in Wind-

ham was widely quoted as saying that “Prattsville is toast.” Everything in Prattsville was destroyed. After the storm, only the ruins of four buildings remained.

Hundreds of utility workers from Florida, Topeka, Kan., Tulsa, Okla., and places in between traveled to the affected areas to put in 12- to 14-hour days clearing the devastation and restoring power. People are waiting for their areas to be cleared and power restored, as well as for water to drink and wash with while their food rots.

New York state issued some 78 boil-water orders in areas where the safety of drinking water was compromised by sewage runoff. Hundreds remain altogether displaced after their homes were knocked off foundations and washed away, or were inundated and remain loaded with water and mud, creating further disaster as mold sets in.

Local volunteers are working through firehouses, churches and community groups to centralize and distribute aid. While the official emphasis has been on restoring the infrastructure, if and when local communities receive any assistance to restore or rebuild varies from place to place.



The many local small farmers in this region also suffered overwhelming losses of their crops. Many will never recover without assistance to rebuild and to restore the lands. Some even lost all their topsoil to storm-related erosion. All along the Wallkill River, farmlands are under water.

Driving north on Route 28, a caravan from Woodstock witnessed the damage to the road and local bridges, and the swaths along a reservoir and the Esopus Creek where flooding had washed out homes and infrastructure. The Esopus alone rose 23 feet above its usual 3-foot depth, surpassing its historic floodplains.

These writers saw huge yellow New York State Department of Transportation trucks hauling away load after load of debris from destroyed housing. Fleischmanns Community Church has been converted to a full-time emergency soup kitchen and resource center for those who have lost much or all. Staffers there detailed the known scope of the displaced population and directed the unloading of truckloads of supplies.

While most scientists shy off from suggesting a direct connection between global warming and any specific storm,

most of them do state that climate change means more and worse storms. Yet one Tea Partyer in the U.S. House of Representatives, Nan Hayworth (R-Mount Kisco, N.Y.), spent the weekend not helping local people who lost power, food and homes, but rather defending her position that the federal government should cut more social services in exchange for the FEMA monies spent on this huge disaster. Tea Partyers in the House intend to add to the suffering by blocking new funds for FEMA. Their plots to further wound the thousands of suffering are a crime against the people.

Anger is rising in the wake of the floodwaters. Reports have come out of Phoenicia of violence sparked by the limited daily water distribution of two pints per person.

A worker in the Catskills who emigrated from Poland years ago said, “This would never happen in Poland.” He went on to state, “The press told us the streets were paved with gold in America, but all we found were potholes!”

Money for jobs, infrastructure and disaster relief, not for a new oil war in Libya! □

Zero jobs! Workers’ crisis deepens Time to fight back

Continued from page 1

more of these jobs are low-wage, part-time and/or temporary.

The contraction of capitalist growth means workers are not needed by the bosses and they are laid off. Government revenues decline but the banks continue to demand their interest and principal from these governments and military spending goes on in the trillions — so government workers are laid off.

The latest and most menacing threat to government workers comes from the U.S. Postal Service, which is threatening to lay off 120,000 workers, close more than 3,000 post offices and get rid of another 100,000 workers by attrition.

Overproduction and unemployment

Why is the growth of U.S. capitalism slowing down? The bosses are sitting on \$2 trillion in cash. Why are they not hiring and are instead laying off? It is not because of uncertainty, as their apologists claim. It is not because of government regulations, either.

It is because of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism itself — overproduction. Capitalist production grows faster and faster as the bosses put in more technology, speed up workers, outsource and offshore production in pursuit of profits. More and more workers, not only

in the U.S. but worldwide, produce more and more in less and less time for lower and lower wages.

The take-home pay of the workers not only does not increase, it is decreasing while production of commodities that must be sold for a profit expands at a galloping pace. The consuming power of the people either rises at a snail’s pace or actually goes down.

The more technology the bosses use, the fewer and fewer workers they need. There are 131 million payroll workers today, which is less than the number of workers on payroll in the year 2000. Today the U.S. economy is at the same level of production as it was in 2007, before the housing bubble burst and the economic crisis hit the world.

That means that the bosses need at least 10 to 11 million fewer workers today than they did four years ago. That is because of job-killing capitalist technology and globalizing the system of low-wage exploitation.

Demand a massive gov’t jobs program!

President Obama is scheduled to make a “jobs” speech in a few days. This speech will not put forward a program that can turn around the unemployment disaster in the country. The only way to even begin to address the mass unemployment,

which will get worse if there is a new downturn, is to launch a massive government-provided jobs program.

It has to be on the scale of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) under the Roosevelt administration during the Great Depression. Seven million workers were given jobs building everything from dams to bridges, parks, schools and highways; they created art, wrote plays, planted trees and did socially useful work.

Back then, just as today, the bosses would not hire because in a depression they could not expand their profits by selling what was produced. People were broke and couldn’t buy. But, under pressure of mass unemployment demonstrations, general strikes and factory seizures, the federal government was forced to become the main employer. State houses and city halls became employment halls. Millions who wanted work, got work.

As a new crisis threatens, the only possibility of blunting a new wave of layoffs and reversing what has happened is to launch a massive struggle for jobs or income and services at every level of government — federal, state and local. The Republicans are openly against solving the crisis, while the Democratic Party is also tied to Wall Street and has put nothing forward to attack the crisis.

Both parties and governments at all

levels are claiming they have no money. But the so-called deficit debate is a false debate. Workers, communities, youth and students come first.

The right of workers to a job, to food, housing, education, is a fundamental right, superior to the rights of millionaires and billionaires; superior to the right of bankers to live off the public funds; superior to the right of the military-industrial complex to get rich from war profits as they expand wars of conquest and occupation.

A mass struggle by a mobilized working class in the streets and workplaces everywhere can begin to shake the money loose from the money bags of the capitalist ruling class. This is the only way to push back this crisis.

In the long run, even a government jobs program under capitalism can only be a temporary band-aid. The WPA did not overcome the depression; mass unemployment prevailed up until World War II.

The only permanent solution to the jobs crisis is to get rid of the profit system altogether and put the economy to work for human need and not human greed. Distribution of the wealth created by the working class must take place on the basis of social and economic need. That is called socialism and it works best where the level of productivity is high — which is exactly where capitalism breaks down. □

Family can stay in house

Homeowners pack court, stop foreclosure

By Dave Welsh
Pittsburg, Calif.

Homeowners from five counties packed the courtroom here on Sept. 2 to support a Pittsburg family facing eviction in a foreclosure scam.

After a four-hour marathon session, the Superior Court judge cancelled the

eviction. The decision means the Parra/Gullo family can stay in their home with a payment they can afford.

"I believe it was a victory for the family in this case," said Delia Aguilar, an organizer with the Bay Area Moratorium (BAM), a homeowners group that is fighting wrongful foreclosures and evictions. "I believe the community had a lot of im-

pact, that they came out here to support the family, often from long distances." BAM organized 44 people to back up the family in court. They came from Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Sacramento and Solano counties — areas hard hit by an epidemic of foreclosure fraud and chicanery by the banks and real estate companies.

The company seeking to evict the family, Antrea Investments Trading LLC, fraudulently claimed to have lawfully bought the property from Wachovia/Wells Fargo Bank after the homeowners failed to make mortgage payments. However, BAM pointed out:

- 1) the homeowner was not in default, having made regular payments which the bank accepted;
- 2) Antrea was not registered with the state to do business in California;
- 3) a bogus "robo-signing" document was used to try to evict the family; and
- 4) there was no "assignment of Deed of Trust" with the county recorder.

Antrea attorney Terrie L. Brewer's jaw dropped when she saw all the supporters filing into the courtroom. She exclaimed, "They bring so many people!" Delia Aguilar concluded that "if all the homeowners will come out, like today, then these courts and sheriffs may be more careful in issuing orders that can result in an illegal eviction." Aguilar explained that it has become standard procedure for real estate companies and their eviction attorneys to "move quickly to take the homes from these homeowners, harassing and scaring

them, using gorilla tactics like threatening to get the sheriff to remove them in four hours. Sometimes these real estate people will call in law enforcement even before filing an 'unlawful detainer' action as if it was their own personal police force.

"But if we all stay together," she added, "we can defeat them and keep our homes."

BAM is part of a network of groups working for a moratorium to stop foreclosures and evictions and allow people to stay in their homes. The Michigan-based Moratorium NOW! Coalition explains the situation:

"Today the federal government, through its takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac along with the Federal Housing Administration, owns at least 75 percent of all mortgage loans. However, rather than utilizing this federal takeover of the housing market to benefit homeowners and renters, the federal government is continuing to bail out the banks, paying the banks full value for the fraudulent and predatory loans which they created, and then throwing millions of homeowners into the streets.

"It's time for the federal government to bail out the people and not the banks. President Obama should immediately declare a two-year moratorium on all foreclosures and evictions, during which time the loans could be renegotiated to their real value, with the banks eating the losses for the fraud they practiced. Rather than selling off government-owned housing to investors and sharks, the government should train our youth to rebuild these homes and reoccupy them with the millions of homeless and unemployed." □

Free Mohsen & Kantar!

Anti-war youth jailed in Michigan



Ahlam Mohsen



Max Kantar

WW PHOTOS: KRIS HAMEL

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Anti-imperialist activists Ahlam Mohsen, 23, and Max Kantar, 24, were sentenced Aug. 30 by federal Judge Robert Holmes Bell to 30 days' imprisonment for an anti-war action last year in which U.S. Sen. Carl Levin was pied in the face. The pair were taken into custody immediately and conveyed to the Newaygo County Jail, which houses inmates for the U.S. Marshals Service in western Michigan.

Mohsen had already spent nine days in Mecosta County Jail after the Aug. 16, 2010, anti-imperialist action in Grand Rapids, Mich. Levin, a senior U.S. senator from Michigan and chair of the powerful Senate Armed Services Committee, had been speaking in a restaurant at an open meeting of a local Democratic Party club. After Kantar read out a detailed statement on Levin's support of U.S. war crimes against the peoples of Iraq, Afghanistan and occupied Palestine, Mohsen placed a de-crusted apple pie into the senator's face. Kantar's statement can be read at mecawi.org.

Mohsen was released after supporters galvanized to her defense. While state charges against her and Kantar were "suspended," the FBI launched an investigation with the aim of charging the pair with federal crimes. On Dec. 30, the two

were charged with several counts, including a felony that carried a possible sentence of eight years in federal prison.

Mohsen and Kantar, who were defended by pro-bono attorneys, subsequently reached a plea arrangement with the U.S. Attorney's office that got all felony charges dropped. The prosecutor as well as the probation department agreed with defense attorneys that the youth should receive sentences below the federal guidelines, which mandated eight months' incarceration.

At the sentencing hearing, Judge Bell grilled Kantar on his political beliefs. Kantar firmly defended his anti-imperialist positions to this Reagan-appointed judge. Then Bell asked him accusingly, "I suppose you would have supported the French Revolution?" to which Kantar replied, "Of course." It was a telling question, showing how far right the capitalist establishment has moved since the days when it appealed to the masses with promises of "liberty, equality and fraternity."

Mohsen and Kantar received support from anti-war and social-justice activists in Michigan and throughout the U.S. The state's campaign targeting Mohsen and Kantar for alleged "assault with a pie" must be seen in the context of the raids, subpoenas and grand jury threats facing other progressive activists throughout the country. See stopfbi.net to get involved in anti-repression struggles. □

Drive for profits causes drug shortages

By G. Dunkel

All the major media are emitting worried noises over the shortages of medical drugs in the United States. The problem has been with us for the last seven years or so and is growing worse, according to the Food and Drug Administration, which began monitoring the shortages in 2004.

Almost all these drugs are generics, which means that the companies producing them can't make the huge profits big pharmaceuticals make on the brand-name drugs they control.

Nobody knows how many people have been affected by the shortages and not even the FDA has firm figures. Drug companies may but are not obliged to tell the FDA when they stop producing a drug.

According to the FDA's "Frequently Asked Questions" Web page, there were 178 shortages in 2010, "132 of which involved sterile injectable drugs" primarily used to combat cancer and for anesthesia. Some specialists with the American Cancer Society — both physicians and pharmacists — feel that the real number is closer to 400.

A survey of 820 hospitals by the American Hospital Association found that almost all have had at least one shortage in the past six months, while half had shortages of at least 21 drugs.

It's hard to tell how these shortages affect patients. In many cases, there are alternative drugs; however, some are more expensive or less effective. Some patients can wait, but they are suffering.

Dr. Michael Link, president of the

American Society of Clinical Oncology, was quoted as saying: "These shortages are just killing us. These drugs save lives, and it's unconscionable that medicines that cost a couple of bucks a vial are unavailable." (New York Times, Aug. 19)

The New York Times, the Washington Times and ABC-TV all present the causes of these shortages as complex, hard to unravel, not well documented.

According to Valerie Jensen, associate director of the FDA's Drug Shortage Program, most are due to problems in manufacturing, ranging from contamination to late delivery of raw materials. Other problems include misprints on the labels and increased demand. (Health Day, Aug. 24)

The main mission of the FDA is to preserve the safety and efficacy of drugs sold in the U.S. by working with these companies when they do have problems to keep these low-cost but effective generic drugs on the market.

Jensen of the FDA; Dr. Otis Brawley, chief medical officer at the American Cancer Society; and The Economist in a Sept. 3 article all point to the low prices for these generic drugs as the real reason for the shortages. The handful of companies involved in producing the drugs are not making the exorbitant profits they want, so they restrict their production to cherry pick what they make the most on which is not necessarily what patients in the U.S. need.

This is just another example of how markets designed around profits fail to serve the needs of the people. □

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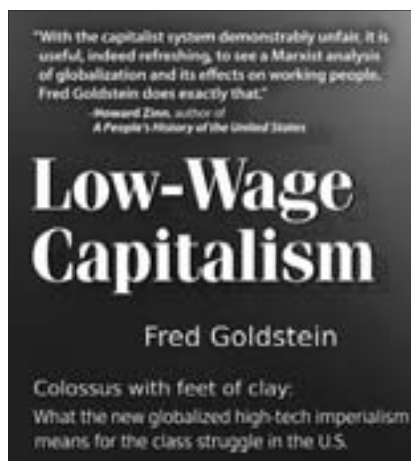
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Michigan activists fight back as Austerity measures imperil thousands

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Detroit

Some 15,000 children and thousands more adults will be cut off cash assistance in Michigan on Oct. 1 due to draconian legislation adopted in the state in recent months. These cuts were passed by the conservative state Legislature and signed into law by Republican Gov. Rick Snyder.

The state of Michigan and its largest city, Detroit, have been at the epicenter of the economic crisis over the last several years. A million jobs were lost in the state in a decade and the unemployment rate remains officially above 12 percent.

In Detroit, the unemployment rate is well over 28 percent officially and if discouraged and part-time workers are included, it is at least 44 percent. The city lost 237,000 residents over the last 10-year census period and there are plans underway for the further downsizing of the public education system and public sector workforce.

The increased attacks on and demonization of the poor coincide with similar assaults on public-sector employees. Michigan state workers were recently threatened with a 10 percent cut in their salaries by Gov. Snyder.

In the public school system in Detroit, the state-appointed emergency manager, former General Motors executive Roy Roberts, has imposed a 10 percent pay

cut on teachers who have already taken severe reductions in salaries and benefits. Members of the Detroit Federation of Teachers and other unions representing the clerical workers and custodians held a mass demonstration outside public school headquarters in late August opposing the cuts.

Detroit city employees have also had their salaries cut by 10 percent along with further losses in health care benefits. Public transportation in Detroit, which has been in shambles for years, has experienced major reductions in bus routes, the slowing down of bus schedules and a 25-cent fare increase for the Downtown People Mover.

Protests hit anti-poor, anti-worker cuts

The Michigan Welfare Rights Organization has been holding weekly demonstrations every Thursday at noon in front of the Michigan state office building at Cadillac Plaza in Detroit's New Center area. These lunchtime pickets are growing.

Maureen Taylor, chair of MWRO, says that the cuts to public assistance are going to make the situation even worse in the state. Taylor was a recent guest on Fox 2 television and TV 33 in the Detroit area.

Standing up against the ruling-class notion that the working class is responsible for its own suffering and marginalization, Taylor has maintained MWRO's staunch defense of the most oppressed

segments of the working class. Slogans such as "Tax the rich! Feed the poor!" have echoed at the demonstrations at the state office building.

The annual Labor Day march in Detroit took on added urgency this year due to the worsening economic crisis facing the people of Michigan as well as the escalation of war by U.S. imperialism in Central Asia and North Africa. Tens of thousands of trade unionists from all the major unions in the Detroit metro area took to the streets on Sept. 5 to demand jobs, income, health care and hands off the pension funds of workers.

Also on Labor Day, President Barack Obama addressed a crowd outside the General Motors headquarters in downtown Detroit.

Activists with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions Utility Shut-offs held up two banners and distributed thousands of leaflets calling for the enforcement of the Full Employment Act and demanding a two-year moratorium on foreclosures and evictions in Michigan and across the U.S. The group called on Obama to bypass Congress and issue an executive order for jobs and a foreclosure moratorium.

Many workers cheered at the banners, took flyers and signed a petition to the federal government calling for a halt to foreclosures and a federal jobs program. □

ATTICA REBELLION Unity & co

This Sept. 13 is the 40th anniversary of the Attica massacre, which followed a rebellion by 1,000 prisoners against horrendous conditions in that New York state prison. Below is a slightly abridged version of an article in the Workers World of Sept. 17, 1971. It was part of an eight-page supplement to the newspaper written by members of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee.

Billionaire Gov. Nelson Rockefeller ended the greatest prisoners' rebellion in modern times with a massacre. Reflecting the blatant racism that has created the concentration camp system in this country and has led to prisoners' revolts nationwide, a guard held hostage by rebelling inmates at Attica State Prison emerged from the prison's main gate free and unharmed with a violent shout of "White power!"

Behind him, within the prison walls, spewed a carnage of blood and bodies, including 28 dead prisoners and hundreds wounded, some fatally. Also dead were nine guards held as hostages — all, according to later autopsies, killed by bullets as 1,000 state troopers, sheriff's deputies and prison guards armed with shotguns, automatic weapons and nausea gas stormed the prison with guns blazing.

"It resembled the aftermath of a war," some observers said, and they were right. Attica, with its prisoner population 85 percent Black and Puerto Rican and the high political consciousness and clenched fist salutes displayed during the rebellion, was one more battle in the continuing war for national liberation of the Black and Brown populations in the United States. Few believe that it will be the last.

On Thursday, Sept. 9, over 1,000 prisoners, long abused by the all-white racist guard force, a vicious prison system, and an economic and political dictatorship held over the poor and working class of this country by the rich, rose up to overpower their tormentors. Within minutes, the inmates seized Cell Block D and 32 guards. Then, from a makeshift megaphone, the inmates issued their demands, many of which reflected the high political content of the rebellion.

Political demands raised

"An immediate end to the agitation of race relations by the prison administration of this state," the prisoners demanded. An end to racial discrimination against Brown and Black prisoners by the parole board; a replacement of the present parole board appointed by Rockefeller with a board

Better bus service for all Detroiters!

After a hot summer, and with winter coming soon, people with disabilities are organizing to improve public transportation. They are taking a step that will help all Detroiters — especially the majority who rely on the Detroit Department of Transportation bus system. Their message is plain: "We deserve better service and refuse to sit back and allow this current broken system to continue without speaking out."

Warriors on Wheels picketed the DDOT headquarters on Aug. 31, supported by members of Transportation Riders United, the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization and Workers World Party. They chanted, "DDOT do the right thing!" and "We're here to fight! No more waiting all night!"

Two big issues are the long waits at bus stops and stranded para-transit riders. People with disabilities who are medically certified to use para-transit are being denied authorization by DDOT. Federal law requires para-transit so people with disabilities will have equal access to public transportation.

Founder and spokesperson for Warriors on Wheels, Lisa Franklin, herself a wheelchair user, says, "For more than two years we — City of Detroit residents — have allowed the administration to use us as guinea pigs as they experimented with a 'new' para-transit program that we once knew as Metro-Lift. We gave them the chance to 'show us how it worked.'"

On Sept. 29 at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Building, WOW will demand that the city establish an Office of Disability Concerns to correct and prevent violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. An effort to insert language for the office in a proposed City Charter revision was rebuffed last week. For more information about WOW's monthly meetings or to volunteer, contact WOW4MetroDetroit@yahoo.com or call 313-759-7247.

— Report and photo by Cheryl LaBash



Native people honor slain woodcarver

Native Americans and supporters gathered at Seattle's Waterfront Park on Aug. 30 in memory of Native woodcarver John T. Williams. Williams had been killed by a Seattle cop exactly one year earlier. The district attorney refused to prosecute the cop, Ian Birk, even though an inquest jury found the shooting unjustified.

At the memorial, attended by 1,000 people, there were a drum circle (seen on right), dancers, singers and speakers before the blessing of a totem pole carved in Williams' memory. His supporters are pressing the city to put this beautiful gift in a highly public place as a memorial to Williams.

— Jim McMahan

PHOTO: JOSHUA TRUJILLO



ION

Courage vs. Rockefeller's machine guns

elected by the people; the right to prison labor union membership while working in the prison and state and federal minimum wage instead of the present slave labor; constitutional right to legal representation at parole board hearings; “an end to the segregation of prisoners from the main-line population because of their political beliefs”; an end to guard brutality against prisoners; and later the prisoners added their demands for amnesty from criminal prosecution and “speedy and safe transportation out of confinement to any non-imperialist country.”

“Many prisoners believe their labor power is being exploited,” said the declaration of demands, “in order for the state to increase its economic power and to continue to expand its correctional industries (which are million-dollar complexes), yet do not develop working skills acceptable for employment in the outside society, and which do not pay the prisoner more than an average of 40 cents a day. Most prisoners never make more than 50 cents a day. Prisoners who refuse to work for the outrageous scale, or who strike, are punished and segregated without the access to privileges shared by those who work; this is class legislation, class division, and creates hostilities within the prison.”

The prisoners set up a People's Central Committee which included Black, Puerto Rican and white members, and organized their own typing pool and sound system. As for the hostages, according to Tom Soto of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee who saw them, the guards were well treated, undoubtedly much better than the guards had ever treated the prisoners.

Rockefeller rejects amnesty

Nelson Rockefeller, billionaire governor of New York, disagreed. “To do so [grant amnesty] would undermine the very essence” of American society, he said. From the barbed-wired seclusion of his 3,000-acre private estate at Pocantico Hills, Rockefeller rejected the plea of the mediating

Attica prisoners present demands during 1971 prison rebellion. L.D. Barkley second from right.

committee for him to join the negotiations. Instead, this brother of the head of Chase Manhattan Bank ordered the full mobilization of the National Guard units in western New York to prepare a massacre of Attica's inmates.

The demands of the inmates were never seriously considered, and the most fundamental of the demands, amnesty, was never considered by the state. To the prisoners, this was crucial as many were in danger of being framed up on murder charges for the death of a sympathetic guard killed by other guards when the rebellion broke out.

Meanwhile, the troop buildup outside the prison continued. Sheriff's deputies poured in from 13 surrounding counties in their own automobiles, armed with shotguns and 30-30 hunting rifles for “the turkey shoot,” as one racist called it. ...

Under cover of “negotiating,” they were preparing the massacre, as hundreds of National Guard troops were moved into the area on Sunday. Police outside the prison grew increasingly hostile to arriving crowds of prisoners' supporters and relatives. One state trooper leveled his shotgun at members of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee and growled, “Get out of the roadway or we'll wipe you out!”

Meanwhile, relatives of prisoners were denied access to the prison grounds by police, although relatives of hostages were allowed in. ... A curfew was also imposed in the town of Attica to prevent angry Black, Brown and white supporters from exercising their right to be at the scene. ...

Yesterday, Monday morning, the state's



mobilization was completed and by 8 a.m. 1,700 troops armed with machine guns, automatic rifles, tear and nausea gas, shotguns and high-pressure hoses were poised for the attack. At 9:45, [Commissioner] Oswald gave the signal for the attack to begin. Two Army helicopters circled over the northeast corner of the 55-acre compound where prisoners were gathered. One dropped canisters of nausea gas onto Cell Block D, while the other swooped down on the men below, firing automatic weapons into the crowd of prisoners, shooting them down in “Vietnam” fashion. The prisoners had no weapons to return the fire but defended themselves as valiantly as they could. Their only means of defense were hand-made weapons. It was a massacre.

Capitalist press lied

Yesterday the capitalist press was full of horror stories of hostages with their throats cut, mutilations and executions. The racist hysteria against the prisoners' uprising

was being carefully fanned. Today the truth came out — the guards were all killed in the same murderous assault by police and national guards as the prisoners.

So far, 28 prisoners and nine hostages were reported killed, hundreds of prisoners wounded. The 28 surviving hostages were taken for treatment to a nearby hospital, while the hundreds of wounded prisoners waited for treatment in a small room in the prison, 8 by 10 feet, the floor covered with blood. “It's the worst thing I've ever seen,” said one doctor emerging from the prison gate in a blood-stained gown.

... This was not just a prison rebellion, but part of a larger class war going on across the country. This was recognized on a national level as President Nixon personally phoned his congratulations to Gov. Rockefeller.

Prisons around the country stirred with anger. In Baltimore City Jail, the second revolt within a year broke out, and prisoners of Cleveland County Prison also rebelled. ... □

Report from inside Attica

'Ready to die for their just demands'

This is part of a report about what went on inside Attica Prison during the rebellion written by Tom Soto of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, who was invited by the prisoners to witness their negotiations with the authorities. Soto's full report was published in the Workers World of Sept. 17, 1971.

By Tom Soto

There is one scene I'll never forget. I was leaving the prison for the last time, late Sunday night. As I entered corridor A leading into the liberated area there was a brother whom I happened to know personally standing on security. His arms were folded as he faced 40 machine guns on the administration side. On his shirt he was wearing a PSC [Prisoners Solidarity Committee] button. Today, I don't know if he is alive.

Another thing I'll never forget — a brother whom I rapped with a long time noted the ring on my finger and asked about it. I told him it had been made from an American fighter bomber shot down by Laotian women over Laos.



I gave it to him, and he considered it to be a very dear show of solidarity between the PSC and the prisoners and the Indochinese people.

As I left, I knew that I might never see these men again. The atmosphere was filled with tension. There were many hugs and kisses, many goodbyes, many messages to families on the outside. Yet there was also an incredible strength and determination among all the prisoners to

fight for their just demands or die in the attempt.

Finally, I'd like to add that the prisoners don't view themselves as criminals. They know that they — the Black people, the Puerto Rican people, the poor white people — are not “criminals” but oppressed people, driven by poverty. They know that they have been denied jobs; they have families to support; and they know that the only way for poor people to survive, for those with no hope of getting jobs, was through stealing \$20 or \$100 or \$200, in other words, crimes of survival.

They see themselves as victims of a racist society which oppresses and exploits their people. They see the Rockefellers, the Mellons, the big corporations, the banks, those who rob and steal their labor for profit, as the real criminals.

The inmates always told me that they had no intention of killing any of the hostages. They took them because there was no other way to redress their grievances. The guard-hostages were the only thing that stood between the prisoners and sudden death. As it turned out, Rockefeller decided to sacrifice even the

guards rather than to give in to the just demands of the prisoners. The blood of all the dead is on his hands.

But one thing the rulers of this country never seem to learn — they think repression, repression and more repression will end the oppressed peoples' uprisings. In fact, just the opposite is true. The men at Attica were so oppressed, so tortured, so brutally treated that finally they chose to revolt and even die rather than endure life behind those walls any longer. They knew that many would die, yet they chose the dignity of struggle rather than the misery of submission.

The Attica uprising was an historic event. It will live forever in the hearts and minds of the oppressed around the world. If the class solidarity shown there is any indication of the future, the cause of the oppressed and poor cannot fail. No prison rebellion in U.S. history has ever been so politically conscious and so determined. The Prisoners Solidarity Committee felt honored to have been invited by the prisoners to support them and is pledged to continue our work on their behalf. □

As war continues against Libya

Imperialists plot theft of African wealth

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

After nearly seven months of war against the North African state of Libya, the combined forces of NATO and its National Transitional Council “rebel” units are tightening their noose around the areas of the country where armed resistance has prevented the counterrevolution from taking over. Those millions of Libyans who remain loyal to the government and are opposing the efforts to loot the national wealth of this oil-producing nation are being pressured to lay down their arms and surrender.

It is being reported that tribal elders supposedly representing the people of Bani Walid agreed to allow the peaceful entry of NATO-backed forces into their city of 100,000 people, which has been loyal to the Gadhafi government. Abdallah Kanshil of the NTC reportedly told the elders, “We won’t go into anyone’s house and we won’t kill anyone.” (Bloomberg News, Sept. 6)

Kanshil’s promise exposes the terrible retribution that has been taking place in other towns and cities where the “rebels” gained ground after heavy NATO bombing of pro-government forces. On Sept. 3, NATO fighter jets had carried out at least 48 airstrikes in and around Bani Walid. Whether the elders who agreed to surrender really speak for the people of the city and whether the NTC will keep its promises remains to be seen.

The battle for Bani Walid has been viewed by the imperialists and their allies as key in their strategic objective of taking control of the central and southwest regions of Libya. These areas are viewed as bastions of defense against the United States and Western European ruling-class plot to seize the natural resources of the country and establish North Africa as a beachhead for imperialist intrigue on the continent.

Roads leading into Bani Walid were blocked by NATO airstrikes that bolstered the armed checkpoints of the rebels. People attempting to leave Bani Walid have

been halted, the men being arrested and the women and children sent back into the city in order to face further NATO airstrikes, which targeted fuel depots, water and food storage facilities and other surviving infrastructural resources.

Charles Levinson of the Wall Street Journal, which serves as the voice of the bankers and transnational oil firms that are ecstatic over the prospect of robbing Libya of its vast wealth, indicated on Sept. 5 that the seizure of Bani Walid was essential in consolidating their plans for Libya, a country that contains the largest proven oil reserves in Africa. Before the imperialist-instigated war started on Feb. 17 of this year, Libya produced 1.5 million barrels of oil per day.

Levinson asserted, “If Bani Walid falls, it could help expedite the fall of Sirte, since it would help cut off Sirte’s access to the south, leaving it fully invested by rebel forces from the east, west and south and from North Atlantic Treaty Organization warships at sea to the north.” (WSJ, Sept. 5)

Central role of Pentagon

Since the invasion of Tripoli on Aug. 20-21, various news agencies and publications have acknowledged with quotes from Western government officials that the NTC rebels would not have been successful without the tactical and strategic assistance of special forces units from Britain, France, Canada and the U.S., along with various intelligence agencies, including Britain’s MI6 and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. This support for the ground movements of the rebel forces was even more essential in the assault on Tripoli.

While NATO ostensibly took over control of the war against Libya on March 31, the indispensable role of the U.S. was further confirmed in a statement made by NATO figurehead Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The NATO chief remarked: “European Allies and Canada led the effort. But this mission could not have been done without capabilities which only the United States can offer.” (Azerbaijani Press Agency, Sept. 5) He added: “Let me put it bluntly: those capabilities are vital for all

of us. More Allies should be willing to obtain them. That is a real challenge. And we will have to find the solutions at the next NATO Summit in Chicago.”

NATO and the G8 imperialist states will be holding a joint summit May 15-19, 2012, in Chicago, a city severely impacted by the current capitalist world economic crisis. Activists are planning to organize protests and a countersummit to expose the criminal actions of NATO and the economic policies within the capitalist states, where millions of jobs, homes, health care and pension plans have been taken away from the workers.

A recent meeting convened by the United National Anti-War Committee (UNAC) at the Kent School of Law in downtown Chicago drew activists from various organizations across the U.S. and Canada to respond to the NATO-G8 Summit invasion in May. Mayor Rahm Emanuel of Chicago is a Democrat and the former chief of staff to President Barack Obama, who began his political career in Chicago. The authorities in the “Windy City” say they are prepared to arrest thousands of activists during protests surrounding the summit.

Paris conference held to carve up Libya

Another meeting called and sponsored by the Western imperialist states seeking to dominate Libya was held in Paris on Sept. 1. This date also represented the 42nd anniversary of the Al-Fateh Revolution that brought Col. Moammar Gadhafi to power in 1969.

The Paris conference was designed to foster the idea that the NTC rebels are the “legitimate” government of the country. The major players in the Paris meeting have recognized the NTC, as has the currently Western-dominated Arab League.

Conflicting reports emanated from the Paris conference on what amount of oil and other resources each imperialist state would take from Libya. In addition, ongoing resistance by the people in Libya against the neocolonial takeover of their country could very well require the presence of U.S. and NATO military forces indefinitely.

According to a Russian news network,

“This foreign military and advisory presence may turn Libya into another puppet regime where the oil pipes and stations — in which Western companies have a vested interest — may become a separate kingdom within a ‘kingdom’ to be protected by international troops in the Western importers’ interests.” (RT.com, Sept. 1)

Yet the African Union, the continental organization of 54 member states, has refused to recognize the NTC as the government in Libya, despite tremendous pressure from the U.S. and other NATO countries. The AU has consistently called for a negotiated settlement in Libya and the withdrawal of foreign forces.

The AU maintains that the NTC does not represent the people of Libya and has been placed in authority by the NATO states. It has continued to draw attention to the NATO-backed forces’ systematic abuse of Black Libyans and Africans from other countries who live and work in this North African state.

A Sept. 1 New York Times article reported, “This is a dangerous time to be a black African in Libya.” The article exposed the imposition of racist norms within Libya as a result of the imperialist war by pointing out that dark-skinned people have been arrested, beaten, tortured and killed by the NTC and its supporters.

At detention centers set up by the U.S.- and NATO-supported rebels in al-Zawiya and Tripoli, up to one-half of the people being held come from other African states. The Associated Press reported, “Rebel forces and armed civilians are rounding up thousands of black Libyans and migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, accusing them of fighting for ousted Moammar Gadhafi.” (AP, Sept. 1)

Also, at least two African states have condemned the racism carried out by the NTC rebels and their Western supporters in NATO. During late August, gunmen sprayed the Kenyan Embassy in Tripoli with bullets and attempted to rape a Libyan woman working at the building. Kenya Foreign Affairs Assistant Minister Richard Onyonka said that all dark-skinned

Continued on page 11

IN BAHRAIN

Protests follow killing of 14-year-old

By Gene Clancy

Thousands of people marched through a village six miles from the center of Manama, Bahrain’s capital, on Sept. 1 for the funeral of a 14-year-old boy killed during a protest against the government the day before.

Activists said many Bahrainis were outraged by the death of the boy, identified as Ali Jawad Ahmad. People filled the streets of Sitra in protest and in mourning. They held photocopied images of the boy and chanted, “Down, down, Hamad!” a reference to the country’s ruler, King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, according to a witness.

“It’s a huge march in Sitra village; it’s tens of thousands,” said Mohammed al-Maskati, the president of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights, who attended the march. Images posted online showed a large crowd moving through the streets with the boy’s coffin. (New York Times, Sept. 2)

Nabeel Rajab, president of Bahrain’s Center for Human Rights, said that peo-

ple took to the streets Thursday night and remained there into early Friday.

Riot police tossed tear gas canisters and shot rubber bullets in hopes of breaking up the protest, according to Rajab, who said he witnessed the clashes in one Manama suburb and also spoke to multiple eyewitnesses.

Journalist Mazen Mahdi added that he witnessed a similar crackdown in Sanabis, another suburb of the capital, and saw security forces sealing off the area.

In response, protesters set up makeshift barricades and threw stones at riot police in an attempt to stop them from going further into residential parts of the suburbs.

“Security forces raided homes and fired shots into Shiite suburbs as a form of collective punishment,” said Rajab. “It is a common tactic they use to stop youth from demonstrating against the regime.” (CNN, Sept. 2)

In addition to the killing of the youth, the clashes resulted in several injuries and dozens of arrests, according to Rajab.

Although ignored by the U.S. media,

the Bahraini masses have conducted an ongoing struggle against the monarchist regime, which used lethal force against peaceful civilians in an attempt to crush an uprising earlier this year. Thousands of Saudi troops armed with tanks who invaded Bahrain in March aided the king.

More recently, another U.S. ally, Pakistan, sent thousands of mercenaries to quell the protests in Bahrain.

The Bahraini government in Manama has been recruiting former soldiers and police from Pakistan at a steady rate to strengthen the government’s forces. In many demonstrations, Bahraini protesters have shouted slogans in Urdu against Pakistani security forces. Pakistani and Saudi forces have played a major role in suppressing anti-government protests in Bahrain since the beginning of unrest in February. (The Nation, Aug. 22)

Bahrain is a close ally of the United States and houses the headquarters of the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet. Even as the U.S. and NATO viciously intervene in Libya and Syria, allegedly in the name of human

rights, the U.S. has given Bahrain’s openly undemocratic regime a virtual blank check to carry out repression.

Thousands of protesters have been detained, tortured and killed. Medical personnel who attempted to treat wounded demonstrators earlier this year were arrested and given life sentences. Two protesters have received the death penalty.

The trials and convictions continue and are the work of military tribunals in violation of international law. (Amnesty International, Aug. 31)

On July 24, the United Nations high commissioner on human rights spoke out against the harsh sentences, including life imprisonment, handed down to activists in Bahrain, saying their trials bear the marks of “political persecution.” (U.N. News Service, July 24)

Many of those detained in Bahrain’s Dry Dock Prison have been conducting hunger strikes to protest the arbitrary detention and military crackdown in the country. The Bahraini masses deserve the support of freedom-loving people everywhere. □

So. Koreans unite against newly exposed U.S. military crime

By Monica Moorehead
Seoul, south Korea

This May, three U.S. soldiers who fought in the Vietnam War — Steven House, Robert Travis and Richard Cramer — publicly admitted that in 1978 they participated in dumping hundreds of barrels of toxic chemicals, including Agent Orange, at Camp Carroll, a U.S. military base in south Korea.

One of these soldiers has apologized to the Korean people, but the failure of the U.S. government or its military commanders to do so has touched off widespread anger and demonstrations in the southern part of the Korean peninsula, which has been occupied by the U.S. military since 1945.

On Aug. 15 of that year, the defeated Japanese rulers had to give up their claim to all of Korea, which they had held as a colony for 35 years. But eight years later, in 1953, the Korean peninsula was formally divided along the 38th parallel following a bloody, genocidal war in which the U.S. military slaughtered millions of Koreans in the north and south. To this day, the U.S. still refuses to sign a peace treaty with the north that would lead to reunification and the withdrawal of more than 30,000 U.S. troops who still occupy the south.

With a population of more than 40 million people, south Korea is ruled by President Lee Myung-bak, an outright U.S. puppet who is former president and CEO of Hyundai Engineering and Construction.

According to the International Monetary Fund and CIA World Factbook, south Korea last year ranked 15th amongst all countries in terms of its gross domestic product. This high ranking, however, obscures the fact that the current global capitalist economic crisis has hit south Korean workers very hard.

According to the Korea Alliance for Progressive Movements (KAPM), in 2008 the average monthly income of the bottom 20 percent equaled about \$993. To pay for a daughter or son to go to college would bankrupt a family, since the tuition fee alone is \$9,950. Some 2.1 million workers out of 18 million employed in workplaces with 50 workers or less don't receive the minimum wage; 1.3 million people can't afford water and electricity.

Another U.S. military atrocity

It is within this broad social context that all sectors of Korean society have organized a growing, dynamic, broad-based campaign of students, workers, peasants and women to expose yet another crime committed by the U.S. military against the Korean people — the dumping of toxic chemicals on their soil.

The three soldiers mentioned above were among those ordered by the U.S. military in 1978 to dig a ditch the length of a city block and bury 55-gallon drums marked "Province of Vietnam, Compound Orange." The military buried 250 drums of defoliants stored on the base, which served then as the U.S. Army Material Support Center in Korea. Later, they buried chemicals transported from other areas on as many as 20 occasions, totaling up to 600 barrels.



WW PHOTOS: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Top, Monica Moorehead, right, at anti-Camp Market march in Incheon, Aug. 14. Above, Camp Carroll today. Right, Kim Sun Woo, Hwang Sun in front of anti-U.S. military banners, Camp Carroll, Aug. 12.



Over the years, all three former GIs have developed major chronic illnesses. House has since come to south Korea to apologize to the Korean people for his role.

Agent Orange, developed by Dow Chemical and Monsanto corporations, was used as a weapon of terror by the Pentagon against the Vietnamese people as they were fighting for their liberation. An estimated 10 million gallons of the deadly chemicals were sprayed throughout the forests and rice fields. Those effects are still being felt in Vietnam today, especially with untold numbers of birth defects and damage to the ecology.

According to the website of Statistics Korea, the Chilgok area near Camp Carroll in the city of Waegwan reported an incidence of cancer between 2005 and 2009 that was 18.3 percent higher than the national average. Mortality rates for nervous system diseases in Chilgok were also above the national average.

To this day, the U.S. has refused to foot the bill for the enormous clean-up of the chemicals at Camp Carroll and other bases where chemicals were stored, such as Camp Market and Camp Page. The south Korean government has provided about \$3.4 million to clean up chemicals at two other former U.S. bases, Yongsan Army Garrison and Camp Kim. This is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the cost of a complete removal of these chemicals and rehabilitation of the soil. Chemical tests are being conducted at 85 former U.S. army bases that were returned to south Korean "control" between 1990 and

2003. According to Korean activists, top soil has been added to Camp Carroll since 1978, making any findings inaccurate.

The south Korean progressive movement is demanding that the U.S. apologize for the chemical dumping and that it pay reparations to the Korean people for the irreparable damage. It also calls for the repeal of the Status of Forces Agreement. The U.S. is in clear violation of the agreement, which is supposed to set standard, respectful rules of conduct for a foreign military force occupying another country's soil. The U.S. military, however, is allowed to make up its own rules in order to protect the global profit interests of the transnational corporations and banks — at the expense of the sovereignty of another country.

Justifiable outrage builds

This writer was able to participate and present solidarity messages at five demonstrations organized by the KAPM against these chemical dumpings and also against the planned establishment of a U.S. naval base on the island of Jeju. In the city of Incheon, hundreds of Koreans of all ages, led by young activists, marched on Aug. 13 around Camp Market, which is surrounded by high walls and barbed wire. Many young people wore tattoos on their arms demanding the removal of south Korean President Lee.

At one point during the march, water-filled balloons were passed out to the protesters, who then threw them at one of the camp's gates. Cheers were heard as each balloon hit the gate.

This writer was able to interview a number of organizers against the U.S. chemical dumping, including Hwang Sun from the Joint Committee of Civil Rights, and youth activists Sin Yeh Hyun and Yoon Tae Eun.

Kim Sun Woo, executive director of the North Kyungsang Task Forces, told WW in front of Camp Carroll, "We are fighting for the truth about Agent Orange and other chemicals. To find the truth, there are two things to be done. First of all, the U.S. government should reveal the records. Second of all, the U.S. and Korea should be able to investigate equally. The current relationship between the U.S. Army and Korea is like a subordinate relationship.

"Currently, the way the investigation is done is that the U.S. government leads the investigation and the Korean government just watches it. So we need an equal relationship. Starting next Tuesday [Aug. 23], another [Republic of Korea]-U.S. joint military exercise will happen around the Korean peninsula. We think it's a problem that with the unresolved Agent Orange issue still there, there is still a military exercise going on, which Korean people don't want. Regarding this, we want the U.S. people to pay attention to this, and for peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula, please do educate people and do various activities."

Monica Moorehead represented the International Action Center on Aug. 12-16 at various anti-U.S. military demonstrations in south Korea.

From Attica to Pelican Bay – Tear down the walls!

On July 1, hundreds of prisoners at the Pelican Bay State Prison in California went on a hunger strike for their right to be treated like human beings within inhumane conditions. Their demands were basic and immediate: an end to group punishment and administrative abuse; the abolition of the “debriefing” policy and modification of active/inactive gang status criteria; that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation comply with recommendations regarding long-term solitary confinement; adequate and nutritious food; and the expansion of programming, correspondence and other privileges for indefinite security housing unit-status prisoners.

Soon afterwards, upward of 6,000 prisoners at 11 other so-called correctional facilities joined the hunger strike. National and international support actions for the hunger strike spread like wildfire, putting pressure on prison authorities to come to the bargaining table, just as workers force bosses to the table over a union contract. With some of the hunger strikers facing death, on July 20 the prisoners temporarily called off the strike after prison authorities agreed to ongoing mediation. The prisoners stated that they reserved the right to resume the hunger strike if the prison authorities did not meet their criteria.

The PBSP prisoners have decided they will resume their hunger strike on Sept. 26 following a disappointing meeting Aug. 18 with California Undersecretary Scott Kernan. PBSP inmate Mutupe Duguma, aka James Crawford, explained on the PrisonMovement Webblog why the hunger strike will be continued: “This is the only way to expose to the world how racist prison guards and officials have utilized policy in order to torture us. And we have the material to expose them because many of us suffer from serious medical conditions or a lack of medical treatment, which we inherited right here in SHU.”

Thousands of prisoners throughout Georgia had carried out a week-long jobs action strike in December. Prisoners of all nationalities and religions stayed in their cells to protest intolerable conditions. These prisoners are paid slave wages by some of the biggest corporations in the world, like JCPenney, Best Western Hotels, Honda, Chevron, IBM, Microsoft, Victoria’s Secret and Boeing. Many prisoners in Georgia and elsewhere are paid less than 50 cents an hour to work in call centers, a global phenomenon resting upon capitalist restructuring for superprofits.

These prisoners in Georgia and California are carrying forth the legacy of the heroic Attica rebellion, which occurred 40 years ago in upstate New York. Hundreds of Black, Latino and white prisoners forged an unbreakable bond of unity when they took prison guards hostage as a necessary tactic to force prison officials to the bargaining table. These prisoners captured world attention in their quest for justice and self-determination. Their rebellion was sparked by the cowardly assassination of George Jackson, a revolutionary prison leader and Black Panther Party member, in San Quentin prison on Aug. 21, 1971.

Many of the demands of the Attica brothers were outright revolutionary, a reflection of the upsurge of the national liberation movements at home and abroad. One demand was to have prisoners recognized as workers, with the right to a living wage with decent working conditions, the right to have unions and not to work more than eight hours a day. Another demand was the right to amnesty for the Attica prisoners and political asylum in the socialist countries of Cuba and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The Attica rebellion was drowned in blood by Gov. Nelson Rockefeller’s National Guard, who killed 39 prisoners and nine of the hostages in retaking the prison. Hundreds of prisoners were forced to crawl naked on the ground as they were beaten by guards.

What do the Attica rebellion and the prison strikes in Georgia and California have in common? Prisoners are among the most exploited and repressed workers and are hidden from the rest of society. Having lost their freedom of movement, prisoners are forced to find other means to have their voices heard.

As the global capitalist economic crisis worsens and jobs disappear, the jail and prison population inside the U.S. will swell with even larger numbers of desperate oppressed workers, now close to 3 million. In the interest of building the broadest class solidarity the progressive movement must support the demands and tactics of prisoners, who are an integral sector of the working class. The prisons are the crime! To rebel is justified! Long live the spirit of Attica! □

Lies & omissions: U.S. ‘terrorism report’

Here is the U.S. dripping blood from its bombing of Libya. It sends drones to kill villagers in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It keeps five Cubans in prison for 13 years now for the “crime” of trying to thwart U.S.-based terrorist attacks on their homeland.

What else but imperialist arrogance explains how the U.S. State Department could have the audacity to issue a report on international terrorism — one that calls Cuba a sponsor of state terrorism?

But it did, in its Aug. 18 “Country Reports on Terrorism 2010.”

In a truly Alice in Wonderland moment, the State Department gives as a reason that “Cuba continued to denounce U.S. counterterrorism efforts throughout the world, portraying them as a pretext to extend U.S. influence and power.” It adds that “Cuba did not sponsor counterterrorism initiatives or participate in regional or global operations against terrorists in 2010.”

So because Cuba refuses to join and support the U.S. capitalist devastation of the world through war and exploitation of the globe’s workers and resources, it is cruelly blockaded and vilified.

Cuba’s Aug. 19 reply got it right:

“The U.S. government, which historically has practiced state terrorism, extrajudicial killings, kidnappings, assassinations with drones, torture and illegal detentions, which has established secret prisons, which is responsible for the death of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians as a result of occupation and wars of conquest in Iraq and Afghanistan, that systematically bombed sovereign states such as Libya, does not have the slightest morals nor any right to judge Cuba, which has an unblemished record in the fight against terrorism and has also been consistently the victim of this scourge.” (www.cubaminrex.cu)

The State Department “report” admits that “The Cuban government continued to aggressively pursue persons suspected of terrorist acts in Cuba.” But it failed to disclose that, according to contrainjerencia.com, more than 60 fugitives from Latin American justice are being harbored in the U.S. with full knowledge of the State Department. They include the infamous Luis Posada Carriles and, until his recent death, Orlando Bosch, both responsible for the first mid-air bombing of a civilian flight. The U.S. ignores Venezuela’s official demand that the U.S. adhere to international law and treaty by extraditing Posada Carriles to stand trial for the Cubana 455 bombing.

Also “Jose Dionisio Suárez Esquivel, aka Charco de Sangre, (Blood bath). An accomplice in the assassination of Chilean Foreign Minister Orlando Letelier and his assistant Ronni Moffitt. Released by George W. Bush. Lives in Miami. ... Jaime Garcia Covarrubias, former head of Pinochet’s repressive agency, accused of torture and murder, now a professor in the Pentagon Academy, Washington, D.C. ... Inocente Orlando Montano, Salvadoran colonel wanted by Spanish courts for the murder of Jesuits. Was granted asylum in the U.S.” We join with Cuba to demand that the U.S. government “punish the real terrorists who now reside in U.S. territory, free the Five anti-terrorist heroes and end the policy of blockade and hostility against [Cuba], which threatens the legitimate interests of both peoples.”

On the anniversary of the great Attica prison rebellion and a year of hunger strikes among U.S. prisoners protesting inhuman treatment, we also demand an end to racist police terror in U.S. streets and torture in U.S. prisons, including Guantanamo — the U.S. military base occupying Cuban territory. □

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Sandinista revolution enters second phase

By Martha Grevatt
Managua, Nicaragua

When Nicaraguan workers flash the “V” for victory, it has a double meaning. The two fingers represent the number two ballot position for President Daniel Ortega, who is running for re-election in the Nov. 6 elections. Polls show Ortega, the candidate of the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN), leading with 57 percent against five opposition candidates.

The FSLN is named for liberation fighter Augusto César Sandino, who was murdered by U.S. Marines in 1933. In 1979, guerrilla fighters from the front overthrew the hated, U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. A five-member “junta” that included Ortega took over leadership. In 1984 Ortega was elected president.

From 1981 to 1990 the U.S. engaged in economic sabotage against Nicaragua and financed the “contras,” counterrevolutionaries who waged a war of terror that cost 40,000 to 50,000 lives. In 1990, Ortega lost to opposition candidate Violeta Chamorro, whose campaign was heavily funded by the U.S.

The Chamorro government immediately pursued a pro-capitalist path of privatizing public industries and returning to their former owners enterprises that had been seized by exploited workers. These so-called free market reforms, demanded by the International Monetary Fund, continued under subsequent pro-Washington regimes.

The Nicaraguan working class did not throw in the towel. On the contrary, the Frente Nacional de Trabajadores (National Workers Front) was founded after the Chamorro victory by seven unions representing teachers, health care workers, agricultural workers and white-collar professionals. The FNT, which was formed to “achieve unity of the union movement and fight against neoliberalism,” supports the FSLN candidates.

Since 2006, when Ortega was returned to office, the government has taken major steps to reduce poverty and inequality and put the well-being of the Nicaraguan people first.

Dr. Paul Oquist, currently President Ortega’s minister for national policies, outlined these developments in detail for delegates to the Encuentro Sindical Nuestra América (Union Meeting of Our America), held in Managua, Nicaragua, on Aug. 25-27.

The FSLN-led government favors redistribution of wealth. It gives assistance to small farmers and thousands of worker-owned and -run cooperatives, not to big agribusiness as in the U.S. Under the FSLN, the cost of living for an average family has gone down while minimum salaries have doubled.

While foreign capitalism retains a solid presence — McDonald’s, Subway, Coca-Cola, Exxon, etc., are all over Managua — the gap between the highest and lowest household incomes has narrowed dramatically.

Illiteracy, which the first FSLN government had worked to eradicate but which stood at 22 percent in 2006 after 16 years of pro-U.S. regimes, is now down to 3 percent. Infant mortality is down to 22 per 1,000 live births and pregnancy-related deaths have been reduced. Most children have received vaccinations. Free health care and free education are defined as rights in the constitution.

Based on per capita income, Nicaragua is the second-poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Oquist considers Nicaragua’s advances to be particularly significant in light of the current capitalist crisis, which has caused incomes to fall worldwide.

A stroll around downtown Managua shows the commitment to people. This writer encountered an optician providing free eyeglasses to senior citizens, posters and brochures for campaigns against child sexual exploitation and for HIV prevention, and an office that provides free conflict resolution for disputes between neighbors, coworkers and family members.

Working class backs Sandinistas

The FNT is a force in Nicaragua. While membership is voluntary, most workers opt to join. The health care union Fetsalud, for example, counts 80 percent of the workers it represents as members. The FNT’s progressive politics are exemplified by a March 30 statement, still at the top of its Web page, condemning the war against Libya.

Young union members are among the most active. Hundreds of youthful workers proudly waved red and black FNT flags during a rally Aug. 25 to support the Cuban Five, who are imprisoned in the U.S. These same young volunteers made sure the union meeting ran smoothly: they handled registrations, kept the coffee pots and water coolers full, made copies of doc-



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

These banana workers are suing Dole for exposing them to carcinogenic pesticides.

uments and nailed together the platform for the closing ceremony with Ortega.

During downtime between sessions, the young volunteers got everyone moving to a popular campaign song: a barely recognizable version of the R and B classic, “Stand by Me,” with a dance beat and new words “Again, again Nicaragua will triumph, with peace, love and dignity.”

In poor and working-class neighborhoods, homes are decorated with FSLN flags, graffiti and election campaign paraphernalia. It’s hard to find any expressions of support for the opposition candidates.

This year the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, ALBA, helped the Nicaraguan government create permanent housing. ALBA was initiated by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and includes Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, and Dominica. Out of this came the Heroes of Nemagon housing project for the families of banana pickers.

For almost 20 years the Association of Former Bananeros has been fighting the Dole Food Co. to get compensation for terminal illness and sterility caused by a toxic pesticide not even used in the U.S. called Nemagon. WW spoke to four members of the association.

“They are all sick,” said Association President Altagracia del Socorro, pointing to the vice president, secretary and another comrade. She showed me a large lesion on her own forearm. “Skin cancer.” Their lawsuit against Dole is still tied up in U.S. courts.

Until recently they lived in tents erected outside the National Assembly in Managua to draw attention to their cause. They now collect pensions and live in comfortable housing.

The ex-bananeros told me they are hoping for two things: a Sandinista victory Nov. 6 and for Hugo Chávez, who is also battling cancer, to make a speedy recovery. □

As war continues against Libya Imperialists plot theft of African wealth

Continued from page 8
people were being linked to Gadhafi by the NTC. (The Standard, Sept. 1)

Later the Arab League objected to Kenya having any involvement in a United Nations plan to dispatch a stabilization force into Libya.

Another East African state, Tanzania, has backed the AU decision not to recognize the NTC rebels as the government of Libya.

These developments in both the AU

and the Arab League must be viewed within the context of the economic and political dominance of the imperialist states over the governments of oppressed and post-colonial nations. All of these states in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America are constantly under threat of destabilization and military assault.

Challenges for anti-war movement in U.S.

It is even more crucial during this period that the anti-war and peace movements develop and maintain a solid anti-imperialist view of developments in Libya and throughout the regions of Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. The worsening economic crisis within the capitalist states is propelling the ruling class to escalate the war drive against the oppressed nations and to intensify the exploitation and repression of working people inside these Western countries.

What workers and the oppressed are learning in the present period is that there is no benefit for the masses when their governments wage war on other peoples throughout the world. As the “war on terrorism” evolved during the last decade, tens of millions of jobs and trillions of

dollars in social wages have been taken away by the bankers and bosses.

Working people cannot accept any aspects of the lies and propaganda that are generated by the Pentagon and Wall Street to build public support for their wars in Central Asia, Iraq, Palestine and Libya. The imperialists have no right to wage war and to expropriate the wealth of the oppressed nations.

Even though the corporate media have attempted to generate support for the wars being waged by the U.S. government against various nations and peoples around the world, public enthusiasm for the assaults on Libya has remained nonexistent. Most people realize that the real struggle is against the bourgeoisie in the U.S., which has generated the economic turmoil that is forcing joblessness, poverty, social destruction and death on the world.

It will be the movement and organization of the workers and farmers that can effectively arrest imperialist war and capitalist plunder. These movements in order to succeed must take on an anti-imperialist and proletarian internationalist character to ensure the total freedom of humanity. □

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Reactivando la cultura de lucha sindical Sindicato de Boston detiene concesiones y lanza campaña de justicia para jubilados

Por **Gerry Scoppettuolo**
y **Stevan Kirschbaum**

“Nosotros no vamos a celebraciones de jubilación. ¡Vamos a funerales!” gritó Steve Gillis, vicepresidente del Local 8751 de los Steelworkers dirigiéndose a los más de 500 miembros del sindicato de conductores de autobuses escolares de Boston (BSBD por las siglas en inglés, Boston School Bus Drivers Union) y sus partidarios/as reunidos/as en el salón del sindicato de maestros de Boston el pasado 24 de agosto.

La ocasión fue el Mitin de Solidaridad de la Comunidad, Estudiantes, y Trabajadores/as, que forma parte de la lucha por la Jubilación con Dignidad y un Contrato Justo del sindicato. La multitud expresó gritando su aprobación – ya que sin los beneficios de jubilación, los/as conductores/as de autobús no pueden permitirse el lujo de dejar el trabajo y retirarse. Los organizadores del sindicato señalan que después de décadas de servicio, la compañía “los tira a la orilla como un neumático usado”.

Dos horas después, hacia el final de la concurrida reunión, estaba claro que los/as conductores/as haitianos/as, afroamericanos/as, latinos/as y blancos/as – se habían unido como una fuerza imparable y estaban dispuestos/as a quitar de la mesa de negociaciones las muchas concesiones exigidas por la Corporación First Student.

Los/as trabajadores/as llevaron la fuerza de la reunión directamente a las largas negociaciones con la empresa y tornaron la “oferta” de asignaciones para las rutas del otoño del 25 y 26 de agosto, en un mitin de dos días en pro de una jubilación digna y un contrato justo.

Los/as conductores/as de autobús están reviviendo la cultura sindical de lucha, superando las exigencias de concesiones por la empresa a la vez que exigen progreso y justicia económica en un momento en que los sindicatos están bajo ataque.

El sindicato está luchando por los ben-



La reunión fue un homenaje a un grupo de conductores de autobuses escolares de Boston veteranos/as mayores de 65 años.

MO/WWW FOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

eficios de jubilación para permitir que sus miembros de más edad se puedan jubilar con dignidad. La mayoría de los/as miembros tiene más de 50 años de edad. Actualmente, los/as conductores/as de autobuses son los/as únicos/as trabajadores/as escolares que no reciben ninguna pensión y pierden todos los beneficios cuando se jubilan, incluyendo los seguros de salud y de vida.

Recientemente, un trabajador se jubiló, después de décadas en el trabajo, y murió unas semanas después. Debido a que todos los seguros de salud y vida fueron suspendidos el día que dejó el empleo, su familia no tenía los fondos suficientes para cubrir los gastos del funeral.

El sindicato está exigiendo a la empresa que iguale las contribuciones a la cuenta de jubilación (para que contribuya la misma cantidad que los/as trabajadores/as), un pago único de apreciación y que continúe los seguros de salud y de vida que tenían al momento de jubilación.

Un punto culminante de la reunión fue un homenaje a un grupo de conductores/as veteranos/as mayores de 65 años, encabezado por Bob Traynham, de 74 años; Naomi Miller, de 81 años, y Charlie Hoy, de 71 años.

Durante décadas, el sindicato de conductores de autobús ha sido un faro de sindicalismo militante y de lucha por los derechos civiles, oponiéndose a la segregación escolar racista de Boston y apoy-

ando toda campaña popular en pro de la justicia y contra las guerras.

Richard Stutman, presidente del Sindicato de Maestros de Boston, le dio la bienvenida a los/as conductores/as de autobuses y les prometió la ayuda de los/as maestros/as. El concejal de Boston Charles Yancey dijo a la asamblea, “Ustedes están bajo ataque. No nos equivoquemos al respecto. Hoy el Consejo aprobó una resolución de apoyo a los/as trabajadores/as de Verizon, y es necesario que haya una para ustedes también”. Una bendición estuvo a cargo del obispo Felipe Teixiera OFSC de la Diócesis de San Francisco de Asís.

Siempre firme por nuestros/as hijos/as y por todos/as los/as trabajadores/as

Uno de los momentos más conmovedores durante el mitin fue cuando Myles Calvey, agente de negocios de los/as trabajadores/as de Verizon del sindicato International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2222, presentó a una delegación de trabajadores/as sindicalizados/as que estuvieron recientemente en huelga contra el gigante de las comunicaciones. ¡“Estamos con ustedes”!, gritó Calvey. ¡“Ellos nos empujarían al océano si se lo permitimos! ¡Tenemos que tomar una posición firme por nuestros hijos/as y por todos/as los/as trabajadores/as”!

Los/as conductores/as de autobús han expresado su solidaridad con estos/as

compañeros/as uniéndose a los plantones durante la huelga de Verizon. Calvey reconoció la solidaridad entre los dos sindicatos desde la huelga contra Verizon de 1989, cuando miembros del BSBD fueron detenidos durante las protestas de la Local 2222.

Los concejales de Boston, Félix Arroyo y Tito Jackson ofrecieron su apoyo. Arroyo, el hijo del veterano concejal Félix Arroyo padre, es un organizador sindical reciente del Sindicato de Empleados de Servicios, mientras que el padre de Jackson, Herbert Jackson, fue uno de los fundadores de la Gran Asociación de Trabajadores de Roxbury.

Oradores en solidaridad incluyeron a Sandra McIntosh de la Coalición por una Educación de Igual Calidad; José López, del Grupo de Profesores Activistas; Myia X, líder juvenil de la Red de Mujeres en Lucha, SistaCipher y Politicin with the Sistas; Darrin Howell, de Mass-Uniting; Frantz Dry, de Fanmi Lavalas, Frank Neisser, del Movimiento pro Rescate de los Pueblos; representantes del Greater Boston Labor Council, AFL-CIO y muchos/as oradores/as más.

Este mitin, al igual que el cierre de la “oferta” para la asignación de las rutas escolares de verano el 25 de junio, demostró el nivel de unidad verdaderamente histórico del sindicato BSBD.

La manifestación fue el inicio de una campaña en toda la ciudad para la jubilación con dignidad. Los/as miembros del sindicato planean informar a la empresa First Student, al Departamento de Educación y al alcalde Thomas Menino, que ellos/as exigen respeto – ¡ahora!

Habrán resoluciones del Consejo de la Ciudad, audiencias, trabajo de prensa y una amplia campaña de difusión dirigida a padres y madres, estudiantes, comunidades religiosas y a toda la comunidad de Boston. Los materiales incluyen literatura, pegatinas, carteles e insignias. Una petición en el internet se está preparando exigiendo ¡“Jubilación con Dignidad AHORA”! □

Manifestantes se opondrán a racistas en concentración del 11 de septiembre

Por **Leilani Dowell**
Nueva York

Al acercarse el décimo aniversario de los eventos del 11 de septiembre del 2001, activistas y miembros de la comunidad se están organizando para hacer frente a una manifestación racista que está siendo planeada para ese día por las fuerzas anti-musulmanas.

La Movilización de Emergencia Contra el Racismo, la Guerra y la Intolerancia Musulmana, una amplia coalición formada en el 2010, ha vuelto a convocar una manifestación y está llevando a cabo una serie de reuniones en la ciudad de Nueva York. El grupo celebró exitosamente una contra

protesta de 10.000 personas el 11 de septiembre del 2010, ahogando así un mitin racista mucho más pequeño que protestaba la construcción de un Centro Islámico en las inmediaciones de la Zona Cero.

Este año, con toda la fanfarria que rodea el décimo aniversario, la Movilización dice, “Es más importante que nunca no permitir que estos promotores del odio racista sean las únicas voces que hablen a los medios de comunicación y al mundo. Es primordialmente importante contrarrestar, en este período de crisis económica, a las fuerzas que quieren culpar a los/as inmigrantes y a los/as musulmanes/as por los recortes en los servicios sociales, el aumento del desempleo y las continuas guerras”.

Haciendo hincapié en el peligro de permitir que estas fuerzas racistas continúen sin control, la Movilización señala que dos de los principales organizadores de la protesta anti-musulmana —Pamela Geller de la organización Alto a la Islamización de América y Robert Spencer, del Observatorio de Jihad— fueron citados extensamente en un manifiesto escrito por Anders Breivik, el racista extremista que llevó a cabo el asesinato masivo de 77 personas en su mayoría jóvenes en Noruega el 22 de julio.

Para más información y para apoyar la concentración del 11 de septiembre, visite www.IACenter.org/muslimsolidarity. □



La Movilización de Emergencia Contra el Racismo, la Guerra y la Intolerancia Musulmana protestan a 11 de septiembre del 2010.